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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/INQUIRY

Butte Creek Acquisitions and Conservation Easements

Applicant, Principal Investigators

Research Foundation, California State University, Chico

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Project Description and Primary Biological/Ecological Objectives

The Butte Creek Acquisitions and Conservation Easement project is designed to establish a dedicated reserve of funds to implement immediate acquisitions and conservation easements on a case by case basis. One of the major concerns of landowners is that the government is either going to take their land away to protect endangered species or restrict usage to where the value of the land is lost. Another concern is that the government will never pay the true value for property and landowners will always lose in dealing with the government. This project is being developed to overcome the fears of some landowners by establishing a program to address critical, sensitive riparian corridor protections by establishing a fund (Task 1) that is designated specifically for upper Butte Creek. This will allow for a timely evaluation of properties that willing landowners want to protect. Most landowners have little or no idea of what the ecological value of the land may be and need help in understanding the options and regulations associated with using state or federal funds to protect resources. The Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy (BCWC) and the Butte Creek Watershed Project (BCWP) have been working with landowners and stakeholders in the development of a watershed management strategy. One of the recognized needs and obvious concerns is the protection of riparian buffer zones from development. Landowners are skeptical that there is any value in their land to the CALFED priority species, spring run Chinook salmon and steelhead trout. Efforts undertaken by the County to set zoning regulations brought out the worst in folks with concerns of lowering property value to outright taking of property rights. This project proposes to use a different approach that will clearly demonstrate to landowners that the valuable habitats of priority species can be protected without taking away property rights. This project will establish a education program and a fund of \$500,000 to work with agencies, landowners and conservation groups to develop reasonable protections for sensitive areas.

Justification for Project Funding by CALFED

This project meet a number of CALFED objectives such as protection of riparian corridors and development of riparian and floodplain management practices that protect, restore and enhance priority habitats for priority species, specifically shaded riverine and aquatic habitats for spring run Chinook salmon and steelhead trout.

Budget Costs and Third Party Impacts

Property Acquisitions and Conservation Easements	\$500,000
Project Management, materials, other direct costs	\$ 53,873
Indirect	\$ 23,275

Applicant Qualifications

The protection and enhancement of local creeks and watersheds by local community groups is a high priority at California State University, Chico. Toward this end, faculty and resources, conservation groups, public agencies, and others as needed are utilized. As a part of its community service mission, it is the policy of the University Research Foundation to organize teams for special projects and to provide the kinds of services required for this project.

Monitoring and Data Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the project will be conducted by the BCWP staff, Butte Creek Education Project and the Recreation Department at CSUC. Development of the management plan, integration with education programs and initiation of restoration projects will be closely monitored to ensure timely completion of activities and maximum outreach to target audiences; ie., students and recreational users.

Local Support/Coordination with other Programs/Compatibility with CALFED Objectives
NFWF, CDFG, USFWS the BCWC, recognizing the value and compatibility of this type of project with CALFED and other anadromous fish objectives have agreed to contribute to other acquisitions and most likely will provide additional support for the Acquisition and Conservation Easements Program.